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ABSTRACT

This report describes the development of the Forest Trail Library Consortium (FTLC), a network of academic, public, and school libraries in Texas. The growth of FTLC from 4 charter members to its current 16 members is traced, including details about goals and funding. The role of special interest groups (SIGs) is examined, and the goals and recommendations developed by the SIG on retrospective conversion are presented. The rationale for the selection of BiblioFile workstations for retrospective conversion is discussed, along with details about the reconversion procedures. The agreement negotiated with OCLC that provided for certain libraries to be designated as OCLC processing centers for the consortium is explained, including procedures for identifying and shipping materials, and problems with incompatible barcodes are addressed. Activities of other SIGs concerned with acquisitions/collection development, cataloging/authority control, circulation, databases and equipment, and training and documentation are summarized. Supplemental materials include an FTLC organizational chart, the retrospective conversion model, a diagram of the OCLC processing center arrangement, a retrospective conversion log sheet, and a list of member libraries. (MES)

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Trailblazing in East Texas: A Progress Report on the Forest Trail Library Consortium's Networking Project.

Joycelyn H. Claer

In East Texas, one group of librarians has chosen to advance to a new level of service by organizing the Forest Trail Library Consortium. This 501C3, non-profit, member-driven organization has become possible through technology which only recently has advanced so that resource-sharing is now a viable alternative to exclusive ownership. The stated goal of the FTLC is to provide more information, knowledge, culture, and research to more people, more of the time, for less cost (FTLC).

In 1988, the directors of four libraries including Longview Public, LeTourneau University, Longview High School, and Kilgore College, began meeting regularly to discuss resource-sharing arrangements. Initial goals included identifying duplication of collections and services, implementing reciprocal borrowing, producing a shared union list of serials, implementing telefacsimile services, and establishing communication through electronic mail.

Enthusiasm of Texas State Library consultants convinced the charter members that the FTLC could become a more complex entity. By 1989, this group had grown to a total of nine member libraries. These member libraries had adopted a constitution, and by-laws, had obtained 501C3 status, had written long-range

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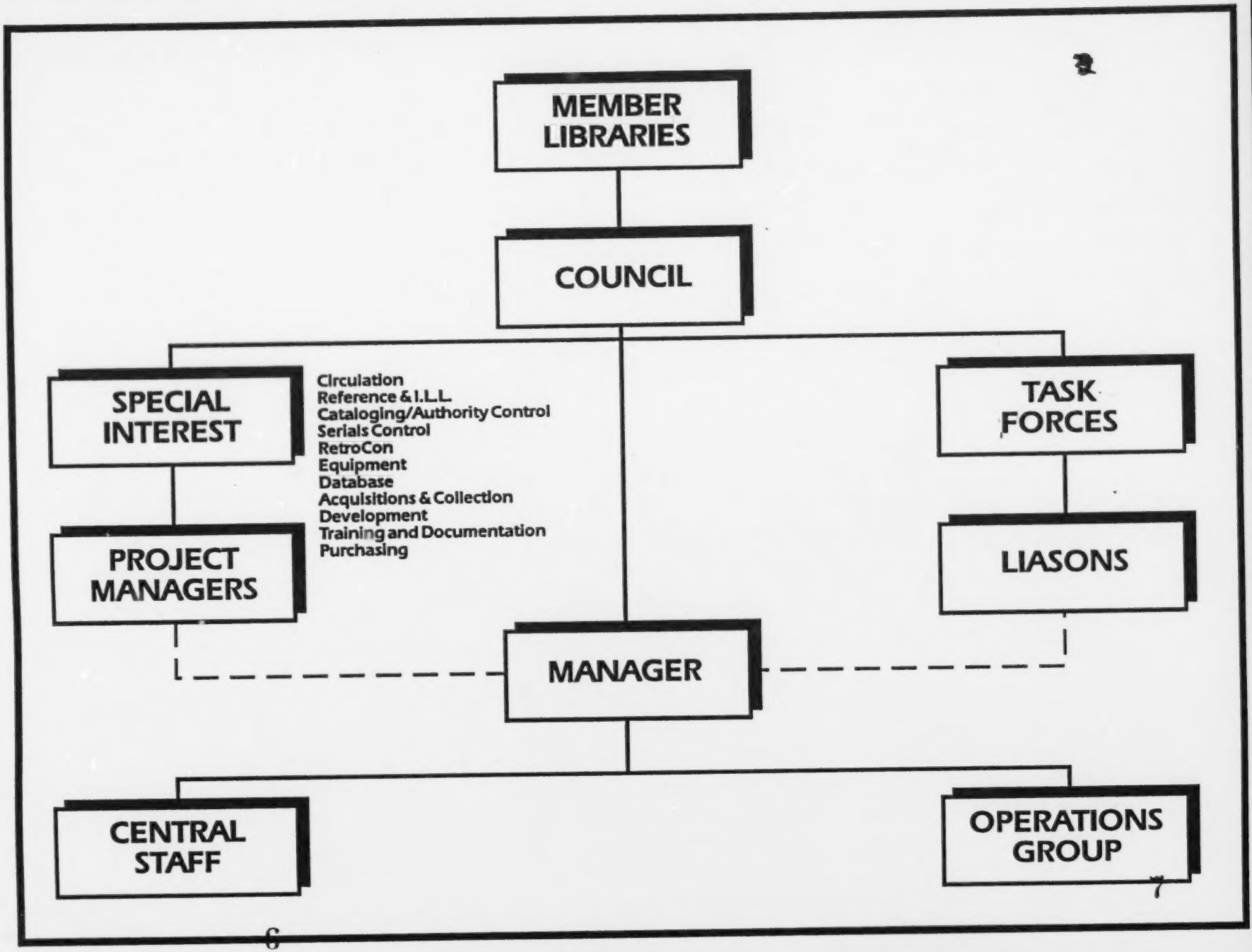
plans, and had made provision for election of officers rather than rotating duties between the four charter members. The members expanded goals to include user access, bibliographic control, coordinated collection management, information and technological innovation, preservation, fund-raising and finance, area economic development, and communication. Mr. Ronald H. Heezen, Director, Longview Public Library, and Mrs. Lois Braymer, LeTourneau University, Longview, submitted a grant application which would include nine member libraries. By August, 1991, the United States Department of Education awarded to the FTLC a $323,109.00 Services to Institutions grant which would provide start-up costs necessary for eventual electronic networking with a completely shared catalog for all the member libraries. Eventually, this shared catalog would provide full circulation capability for all consortium members. The Department of Education grant would provide the money to purchase hardware and phone line installation needed for member libraries to accomplish retrospective conversion in preparation for the future networking arrangements. By September, 1991, the FTLC had grown to fifteen members. Mr. Ronald H. Heezen, Director, Longview Public Library, Longview, Texas, worked with the Department of Education representative, Mr. Neal Kaske, to reallocate the funding so that all fifteen members could benefit from the grant. In return, the FTLC member institutions would provide matching funds in the form of the salaries of employees who would be performing the retrospective conversion. There would be no out-of-pocket expense for the FTLC members -- no new encumbrances to

current budgets. The grant would provide for the first part of the project only, the retrospective conversion. Joycelyn Claer was selected as Project Director for administering the grant and was named chair of the Retrospective Conversion Committee.

By November, 1991, the FTLC had voted in the sixteeth member library, Mineola Memorial Library. Mineola Memorial would be included in the retro-spective conversion plans. By November, these libraries had an organizational structure, had channels of communication, and had documentation strategies in place. The libraries had voted to approve lease/purchase of a mainframe computer which would be housed at Longview Public Library, the temporary base of consortium activity. Members had arranged that Longview Public Library would maintain the mainframe until future plans could be formulated. Mr. Ronald H. Heezen, Director, Longview Public Library, had generously granted all FTLC members access to Longview Public's mainframe. The officers had begun appointing two advisory boards--financial and technical, and had appointed special interest groups to address the following areas: acquisitions and collection management, cataloging and authority control, circulation, database and equipment purchasing, reference and inter-library loan, retrospective-conversion, serials control, and documentation and training (see figure 1.). The FTLC president, Rhonda Harris-Taylor, Lon Moris College, Jacksonville, Texas, charged each special interest group (SIG) to meet during the month of November, 1991, in order to report at the November meeting. Each of the FTLC officers met with the SIG

chairs to help them with individual meeting agendas. Each of the SIGs were charged with the tasks of

> examining concerns appropriate to the committee's area(s) of concentration; developing and reporting recommendations regarding the area(s) of concentration to the FTL membership; overseeing implementation of policies, procedures in area(s) of concentration approved by vote of the FTL membership; facilitating coordination of policies, procedures in area(s) of concentration among FTL member libraries; soliciting feedback from FTL member libraries as policies, procedures in area(s) of concentration are implemented; and evaluating implemented policies, procedures in area(s) of concentration (Harris-Taylor,FTLC).


MEMBER LIBRARIES
COUNCIL
SPECIAL INTEREST
Circulation
Reference & I.L.L.
Cataloging/Authority Control
Serials Control
RetroCon
Equipment
Database
Acquisitions & Collection
Development
Training and Documentation
Purchasing
TASK FORCES
PROJECT MANAGERS
LIASONS
MANAGER
CENTRAL STAFF
OPERATIONS GROUP

Narration. Figure 1.

This organizational chart recognizes that the member libraries drive the elected FTLC council. Special interest groups (SIGs) complement task forces who communicate to and through project managers and liasons. The salaried manager reports directly to the elected council. The manager supervises any administrative staff and any part-time operations employees, while FTLC council members continue administration, public relations, and recruitment.

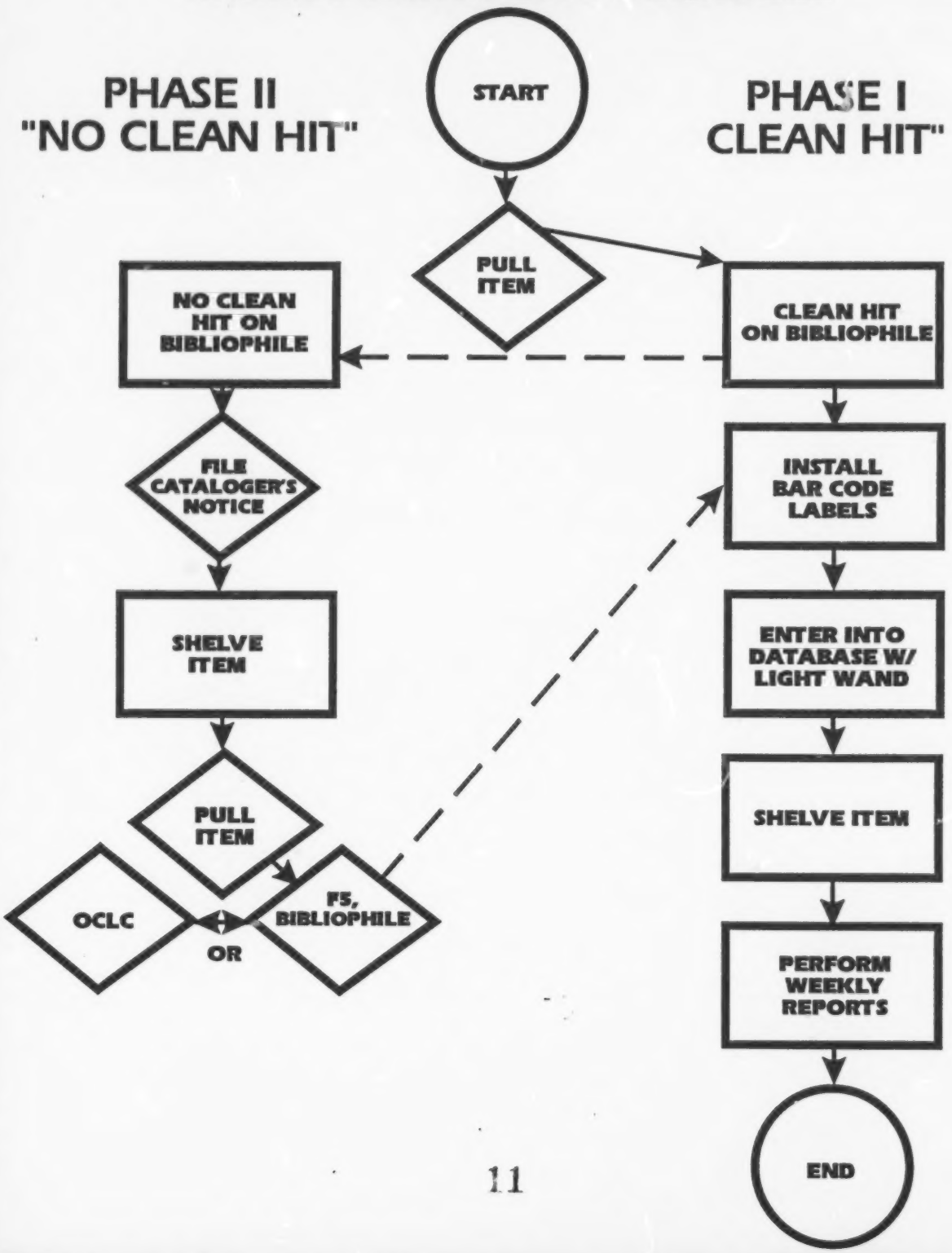
One of the first SIGs to meet was the retrospective conversion group. The members, Kathi Mehan, Assistant Director, Longview Public Library, Longview, Texas, Mary Sue Beatty, Staff, LeTourneau University, Longview, Texas, Joyce Morrison, Director, Upshur County Library, Gilmer, Texas, Jill O'Farrell, Director, Trinity Schools of Texas Library, Longview, Texas, and Paula Russell, Director, Tyler Junior College, Tyler, Texas, and Joycelyn Claer, Coordinator of Public Services and Outreach, Kilgore College, Kilgore, Texas, Chair. In order to complete retrospective conversion of approximately 1.5 million records, the committee formulated and adopted the goal:

> This committee has as one of its goals to provide guidance and direction to the libraries of the Forest Trail Library Consortium in converting their cataloging to machine-readable form with no less than minimum MARC standards and in processing their collections for reciprocal borrowing (FTLC/RC).

This SIG made recommendations to encourage collective purchasing of bar codes, collective purchasing of client bar codes, and collective purchasing of book trucks. This SIG recommended purchasing at least two bar code labels per item, while noting special order of multiple sets of bar code labels for special items such as games, or audiovisual items. Joycelyn Claer, Kilgore College, Kilgore, Texas, assigned each committee member to serve as a liason to at least two other FTL member libraries for the purposes of sharing/gathering information, providing individualized training for each FTL library, and serving as a conduit from the member library to the retrospective conversion committee as well as to the salaried project manager. Additionally, the liasons were to stay in close contact with their member libraries in order to quickly identify problems, to collect weekly documentation reports, and to make sure that deadlines were being met. Joycelyn Claer instructed each committee member to contact each liason library director in order to discuss re trospective conversion projects, to offer training services to each library, to compile accurate information as to 1) each library's holdings, and 2) the number of bar code sets needed by each library in order to begin retrospective conversion. Joycelyn Claer asked committee members to set a training date for each library to discuss the target dates with each library director and to emphasize to each director that target date reports must be expressed in percentages. Each committee member would discuss bar code systems with member libraries in order to determine needs and feelings about bar

codes and report findings in memo form to the chair. Joycelyn Claer then set a training date for committee members at Randolph C. Watson Library, Kilgore College in order to simulate the retrospective conversion process (see figure 2.).

RETROSPECTIVE CONVERSION MODEL



Narration. Figure 2.

The retrospective conversion simulation produced these findings:

1. Retrospective conversion could best be performed by trained individuals during two-hour shifts.

2. BiblioFile will re-format any bar code to LC format, inserting zeroes as necessary, so that the bar code number appearing on the labeled item will not match the number on the BiblioFile monitor in the control number field. This variable creates implications for the Database committee.

3. The FTLC/RC voted to adopt the procedures in the model shown in figure 2.

Discussions of the FTLC council had previously led to the decision to adopt an OCLC cluster model for hardware installation. However, several of the member libraries were already using BiblioFile workstations for cataloging, so that BiblioFile seemed to be a cost-effective means of accomplishing some retrospective conversion. Mr. Ronald H. Heezen, Director, Longview Public Library, worked closely with the Department of Education so that the grant funds would provide for all fifteen member libraries to have BiblioFile workstations, rather than excluding new members. The consortium council hoped that around 75% of the retrospective conversion could be accomplished using BiblioFile. Several libraries had been storing MARC records to diskettes with the forethought that at some future time the diskettes could be uploaded to tape to provide for networking arrangements. Of these libraries, Kilgore College had the most

records. The stored MARC records of Kilgore College could become the core collection from which the consortium database could develop. Retrieving MARC records from BiblioFile and storing them to diskettes with backups would also buy time for the consortium since the OCLC portion of the retrospective conversion project could begin only after all the elements for the OCLC installation and training were in place. The retrospective conversion procedure would consist of two phases. The retrospective conversion SIG recommended that each library make one "complete sweep" through its holdings, using a hard copy such as a shelf-list or computer print-out in order to inventory and reaccession each item found on BiblioFile using a dumb bar code label (with library identification prefix), enter the newly reaccessioned item into the BiblioFile database with a light wand, and return the item to the shelf as quickly as possible. The purpose for the "complete sweep" method was twofold: 1) to make items available to the public as quickly as possible, and 2) to help staff morale. The second phase of the process provided for items which could not be found on BiblioFile immediately. Such items would be returned to the shelf as well, but without bar code labels. Instead, a cataloger's notice would be completed and filed manually, either by attaching it to the appropriate shelf list card or by keeping it in a separate manual file in shelf list order (see figure 3.).

Figure 3.

Cataloger's Notice

Library____ **Date** _____

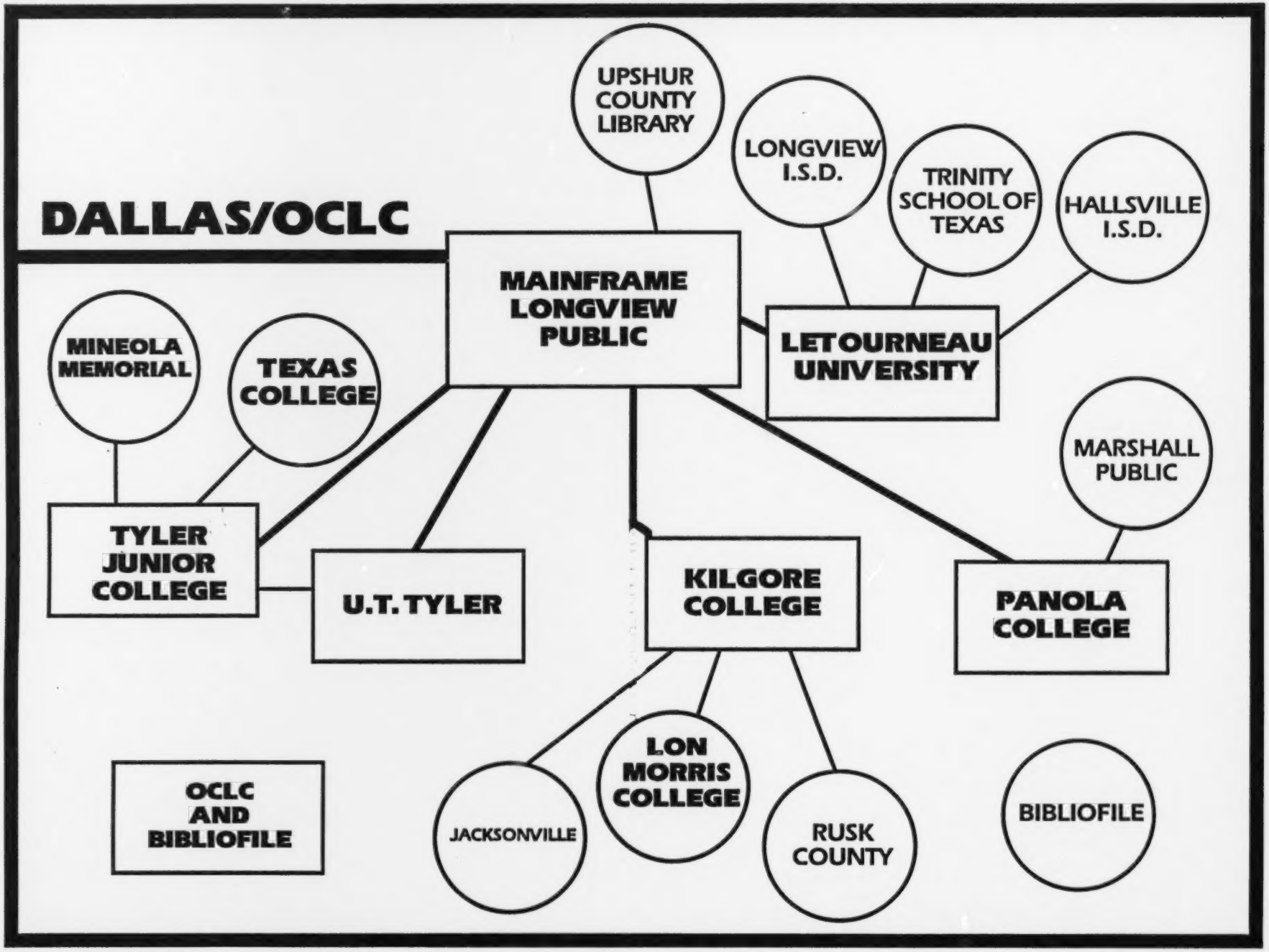
LCCN	_____	Imprint	_____
ISBN	_____	Phy.Des.	_____
ISSN	_____	Tracings	_____
Call No.	_____		
Main Entry	_____	Cards	_____
Title	_____	No Cards	_____
Edition	_____	Other	_____

ftlc

Narration. Figure 3.

The cataloger's notice would provide a means to track those items which had not yet been reaccessioned. At any later time, one could either re-try to find these items on BiblioFile, perform original cataloging using the F-5 function key of BiblioFile, or search for the item in the OCLC database. The arrangement of the Cataloger's notice follows the same format as the MARC fixed fields in BiblioFile.

While all these procedures were being formulated, Mr. Ronald H. Heezen, Director, Longview Public Library, negotiated at length with OCLC through AMIGOS in order to secure dumb terminal sites at five different member libraries in a wide-area network. Only Longview Public Library and LeTourneau University shared OCLC services. In order for 100 per cent of the retrospective conversion to take place, the FTLC desireded five OCLC library terminal sites. On February 13, 1992, and on February 17, 1992 Mr. Ronald H. Heezen met once again with OCLC, and achieved a break-through in negotiations. Mrs. Lois Braymer, Director, LeTourneau University, had proposed an OCLC cluster arrangement. Rather than a cluster arrangement, OCLC agreed to a Processing Center Agreement. (see Figure 4.). Also, FTL libraries purchased Tenet, a network available through the Texas Education Agency, which provided a cost effective means of accessing electronic mail.


DALLAS/OCLC
UPSHUR COUNTY LIBRARY
LONGVIEW I.S.D.
TRINITY SCHOOL OF TEXAS
HALLSVILLE I.S.D.
MAINFRAME LONGVIEW PUBLIC
LETOURNEAU UNIVERSITY
MINEOLA MEMORIAL
TEXAS COLLEGE
MARSHALL PUBLIC
TYLER JUNIOR COLLEGE
U.T. TYLER
KILGORE COLLEGE
PANOLA COLLEGE
OCLC AND BIBLIOFILE
JACKSONVILLE
LON MORRIS COLLEGE
RUSK COUNTY
BIBLIOFILE

Narration. Fugure 4.

The OCLC processing center agreement provides for certain libraries to be designated as OCLC processing centers. Only those libraries would have OCLC services. The remainder of the sixteen member libraries would have BiblioFile only. It is the hope of the FTLC that approximately 75 per cent of the retrospective conversion could be accomplished in-house using BiblioFile. For the remainder of the retrospective conversion, the retrospective-conversion SIG recommends that the OCLC cluster arrangement be used in this manner:

> Once OCLC has been installed, and training completed, all copy and original cataloging will be performed on OCLC. Therefore, each library (node) within a cluster will be sending materials to its primary OCLC terminal site for original cataloging. The identifying and shipping of materials will be performed in this manner:
>
> For each item to be cataloged, the owner library must include 1) shelf list card (or copy), if any, 2) completed cataloger's notice -- indicating on the cataloger's notice whether or not card sets are needed, 3) xeroxed copy of the title page (or main area of responsibility)--writing in the call number, 4) xeroxed copy of the verso of the title page -- writing in physical dimensions and accession number, 5) bar code label set. The owner library must stamp the back of each item with library ID and staple these materials

together, keeping a copy of the title page and verso for in-house records. The stapled materials will henceforward be referred to as a "kit."

The owner library will lay each kit face down in a large shipping box in shelf list order.

The owner library will clearly identify all sides of the box with library ID.

When the box is full, the owner library will tape the box securely closed.

The owner library will deliver the sealed box to the OCLC terminal site and receive a receipt.

The OCLC terminal site which receives the delivered, boxed kits will be responsible for the sealed boxes.

Libraries will be served in the order of receipt.

Each boxed kit is to remain sealed until the OCLC site begins conversion on that box.

Only one box at a time should ever be open.

Kits should never be separated.

Each kit will be treated at the OCLC terminal, then placed face up in an empty box.

When all kits have been cataloged and returned to a box, face up in call number order, the box will be sealed, and the owner library notified.

It is the intent of the retrospective conversion committee that the owner library be responsible for all transport.

Once the kits have been returned to the owner library, each kit should be attached to the original item, which will then

be processed as in Phase I of of the re-con model (see Figure 2.). The items themselves will never leave the owner libraries, nor will the items be removed from circulation.

The retrospective conversion committee recommends that it should be noted that no matter how carefully items are ID'd shipped, and processed, some human error will occur, and should be expected. However, if a serious problem is experienced, the retrospective conversion committee encourages the library to notify its liason without delay (RTLC/RC).

This process is very similar to the proven process used by the Harrington Library Consortium, the first Texas consortium, located in the Texas Panhandle region.

In order to document the retrospective conversion project, the retrospective conversion committee adopted this form (see figure 5.).

Figure 5.

FTLC RETRO-CONVERSION LOG

NAME	DATE	STARTING TIME	FIRST CALL NUMBER	FINISH TIME	LAST CALL NUMBER	TOTAL WORK TIME	TOTAL NO. OF ITEMS CODED

Total Time for This Report _____

Total Items for This report _____

Librarian: Mail to your FTLC Liasion each Friday.

Narration. Figure 5.

This form could be used in a number of ways at the discretion of the individual libraries. Either individuals, or teams, could complete this form. The directors of each of the FTLC libraries are to collect completed forms weekly and to turn in the forms to either their liasons, or to the project director.

While the retrospective conversion committee dealt with procedures, another consideration which had to be resolved was that Tyler Junior College used Code 39 bar codes, while University of Texas at Tyler used Codabar codes. Each institution had considerable investment in bar codes, and TJC's codes were tied with the student identification card which was used campus-wide. These two rather political considerations tied the actions of the retrospective conversion committee until January, 1992. Originally, the retrospective conversion committee had targeted May, 1992, for 20 per cent completion of all retrospective conversion, 50 per cent completion by September 1992, and 100 per cent completion by May, 1993. By February, 1992, these target dates appeared to be unrealistic. Presently, new target dates have not been set, although the original target dates may be useful for the BiblioFile portion of retrospective conversion.

In February, 1992, Mrs. Patsy Harmon, Director, Marshall Public Library, helped solve the bar code dilemma through research and discussions with vendors. Dr. Mickey Slimp, Dean of Learning

Resources, Tyler Junior College, Tyler, Texas, also researched and added that the best bar code readers would read virtually any type of bar code. Bar code costs were not included in the grant budget and would have to be purchased by the individual libraries or by the FTLC. However, collective purchasing of the bar codes would cut the costs. By February 17, 1992, the correct bar codes had been ordered, and would be tested by Mrs. Lois Braymer, Director, LeTourneau University, Longview, Texas, chair of the Database and Equipment SIG before acceptance. Additionally, in February, Mrs. Braymer began visiting all FTLC members in order to test and configure equipment for beginning communication through electronic mail.

At the same time that Joycelyn Claer and the retrospective conversion SIG was organizing procedures, Mrs. Lois Braymer, chair of the Database and Equipment SIG evaluating the FTLC hardware, and Mr. Ronald H. Heezen, Director, Longview Public Library, negotiating with OCLC, other noteworthy SIG activity was taking place.

The Acquisitions/Collection Development group had begun compiling a shared list of serial holdings. Since almost all libraries use EBSCO services, EBSCO offered to provide print-outs of all shared titles held. However, EBSCO could not provide individual holdings. The purpose of obtaining a shared holdings list was to help all member libraries with client service, and to possibly facilitate inter-library loan. This SIG is currently working to

provide holdings in addition to titles held. To date, no formal coordinated collection development has taken place, but such is the intent of this SIG. In the future, such information could be loaded onto a PAC which would serve as a union catalog. It is expected that purchasing policies will be greatly influenced by the activity of this SIG.

The Cataloging/Authority control SIG had met once to discuss issues such as adopting consistant LC subject headings. Consistency in cataloging would relate to the retrospective conversion efforts. Since the FTLC libraries would eventually receive all catalog cards from OCLC, Ms. Kathi Mehan, Longview Public Library, SIG chair, had contacted each library director in order to obtain a configuration profile for card catalog cards for OCLC. Each library in the FTLC was assigned an OCLC prefix and identifier. By November, 1991, Kathi Mehan had received test profile cards from OCLC/AMIGOS, and had distributed these to each library for verification of the configurations and of the number of cards needed. The purpose of the test OCLC cards was to provide OCLC with the individual libraries of the consortium with customized configurations of the catalog cards ordered from OCLC through the consortium.

The circulation SIG, chaired by Mrs. Carol Nylund, Director, Longview High School Library, Longview, Texas, determined that participants, while in agreement philosophically, had concerns in many areas of circulation. One concept which currently seems to

present a hurdle is the use of a single universal card for all consortium members which would still protect individual library circulation policies. To date, there is no universal card in use. A second concept which has yet to be reconciled is the "home library" or "library of origination." the definition of a home library would be the library by which a patron gains access to consortium use. Some of the member libraries have automated circulation systems, some do not. The University of Texas at Tyler currently is the only member library with an automated circulation system large enough to accomodate all FTLC use. Because University of Texas at Tyler already has the DRA system in place, it is very probable that the DRA system will be the choice for the FTLC system-wide circulation when funding becomes available. There is an important relationship between retrospective conversion and circulation because the ability for all member libraries to share all circulation transactions as well as share a public access catalog is essential for achieving the consortium goal of a union catalog with circulation capacity. Circulation transactions will be entered using bar codes. Also, library identification of the physical items will be possible by scanning the bar code prefix.

The Database, Equipment, and Purchasing SIG had ordered and all libraries had received $125,000.00 in hardware. All fifteen member libraries received an Everex 386sx processor, math coprocessor, 4 Meg RAM, 80 Meg Hard Drive, Additional SCSI port, two button mouse, Relisys or Hewlett Packard scanner/printer/fax

machine with board, all cables, connectors and boards necessary to run the equipment, barcode scanner, DOS 5.0 or later, windows 3.0 or later, Word Perfect for Windows, 3.5" and 5.25" floppy drives, 101-key extended keyboards, CVGA monitor, minimum of two additional serials ports, minimum of two additional parallel ports, CD ROM, and an internal modem, along with BiblioFile subscriptions. All libraries were at varying stages of installation and use.

The Training and Documentation SIG instructed each participating library to construct a documentation notebook. Chaired by Mrs. Phyllis Reed, M. P. Baker Library, Panola College, Carthage, Texas, this SIG devised a code which provided an organized method for member libraries to document all materials of a permanent nature. This documentation would supplement the documentation collected by the Project Director and the reports to the Department of Education made by the Project Manager. Training for those libraries who had never before had BiblioFile was conducted by Mrs. Marjorie Heath, Director, Hallsville High School, Hallsville, Texas. Additionally, Longview Public Library had installed OCLC and hosted a three-day OCLC training workshop which was conducted by an AMIGOS representative. Those FTLC members which anticipated housing OCLC sites in the future attended training including general background, cataloging, and inter-library loan.

Additionally, the FTLC Council met for the purpose of designing a

job description for the salaried Project Manager. This person would be hired on a one-year contract and would be responsible for system design for the fully integrated circulation system. The salary of $35,000.00 for one year is the only salary provided in grant funds. Presently, the job description has been written, the position has been advertised, and the council has been reviewing applications. However, no person has yet been hired. Additionally, the council accepted the resignation of Joycelyn Claer as project director and named Mr. Ronald H. Heezen project director as of January 1, 1992.

Mrs. Lois Braymer, Director, LeTourneau University, Longview, Texas, reported to the council that a second Department of Education Grant was available. Should the FTLC successfully apply for this grant, the second goal of the long-range plan would be possible -- that of implementing a shared union list and circulation system using the DRA system. On December 12, 1991, the council members met in order to write the proposal for the second Department of Education grant. As of this writing, the application has been made to the United States Department of Education for funding amounting to approximately $750,000.00 which would include the purchase a FTLC owned and maintained mainframe computer.

Although there is much more work to do in order to supply the service to which the FTLC aspires, the FTLC appears to be on track with retrospective conversion after a short period

necessary for troubleshooting, hardware installation and testing, and OCLC negotiations. Already, the FTLC has greatly benefited its smaller member libraries by providing BiblioFile to them. Also, Longview Public Library and Kilgore College Library have become gross lenders, while many other member libraries have become net lenders in reciprocal borrowing. The FTLC council looks to the future toward attracting more funds and toward expansion. The FTLC constitution provides that any library may join FTLC as long as it resides in a county designated as a Texas Forest Trail or resides in a county which is adjacent to a Texas Forest Trail. The FTLC Council currently looks toward Shreveport, Louisiana, to Centenary College and to LSU Shreveport as prospective new avenues of expansion. Additionally, the FTLC recognizes its responsibility in public affairs as the consortium has formally approached ALA accredited library schools in Texas regarding curricula issues. It appears that the FTLC will become an important aspect of information management in East Texas because of the talent and energy of the librarians who provide leadership.

FTLC members are:
Hallsville High School
Hallsville, Texas
Mrs. Marjorie Heath, Director

Jacksonville Public Library
Jacksonville, Texas

Mrs. Carolyn Simon, Director

Randolph C. Watson Library
Kilgore College
Kilgore, Texas
Wade L. Pipkin, Director

Margaret C. Estes Library
LeTourneau University
Longview, Texas
Mrs. Lois Braymer, Director

Simon and Louise Henderson Library,
Lon Morris College
Jacksonville, Texas
Dr. Rhonda Harris-Taylor, Director
FTLC President, 1991-1992

Longview High School
Longview, Texas
Mrs. Carol Nylund, Director

Longview Public Library
Longview, Texas
Mr. Ronald H. Heezen, Director

Marshall Public Library

Marshall, Texas

Mrs. Patsy Harmon, Director

Mineola Memorial Library

Mineola, Texas

Mrs. Freida Shield, Director

M.P. Baker Library

Panola College

Carthage, Texas

Mrs. Mary Rose Johnson, Director

Rusk County Memorial Library

Henderson, Texas

Mrs. Mary Magee, Director

D.R. Glass Library

Texas College

Tyler, Texas

Dr. Mary Cleveland, Director

Trinity School of Texas

Longview, Texas

Mrs. Jill O' Farrell, Director

Vaughn Library

Tyler Junior College

Tyler, Texas

Dr. Mickey Slimp, Dean of Learning Resources

Mrs. Paula Russell, Director

Robert R. Muntz Library

The University of Texas at Tyler

Tyler, Texas

Dr. Charles Harrell, University Librarian

Upshur County Library

Gilmer, Texas

Mrs. Joyce Morrison, Director